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June 9, 2004

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Local Boundary Commission

Mr. Dan Bockhorst,
Local Boundary Commission Staff
State of Alaska, Division of Community and Business Development
550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1770
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3510
FAX 269-4539

Re: Homer Annexation impact to Kachemak Emergency Service Area

Dear Mr. Bockhorst,

Thank you for considering the impact of the 2002 Annexation to the city of Homer on the newly formed Kachemak Emergency Service Area. (Formerly called the "Greater Kachemak Volunteer Fire and Emergency Medical Service Area".)

At the urging of the public, it was my privilege to canvas the area for signatures on a petition that went before the voters to form the Kachemak Emergency Service Area in October of 2000. In that same election I was elected to represent District 9 (that includes all of the KESA area) on the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly. I continue my service as a member of the Assembly.

There was considerable enthusiasm to form this service area, as all of us recognized the need for expanded emergency services. Not only would KESA be able to contract with the City of Homer, thereby solving a legal quandary that they had serving the areas outside of the City, but KESA would also provide equipment and buildings to ensure rapid and appropriate response. This requires dollars, and the mill levy approved by the voters and the Assembly was based on the recognition of the needs to build a department from the ground up.

And that is where the Annexation truly gravely impacted KESA. The service area covers 200 square miles, extending from the Sterling Highway east to the head of Kachemak Bay and beyond. The annexation removed 4.5 square miles that included 900 residents, and was the most highly developed portion of the service area, representing fully one fourth of the KESA tax base. It is clear, a loss of this magnitude could create a dramatic impact that could delay the ability of KESA to become an effective service by several years.

In 2001 we discovered that a small area called Miller's Landing, located between the existing City of Homer and Kachemak City had inadvertently been omitted from the KESA boundaries, although the 74 residents had voted for formation of the Service Area.

I sponsored Ordinance 2001-48 that requested the Assembly to include this area in KESA so that Miller's Landing could be assured of service under the contract with the City of Homer and took effect January 1, 2002. That area was subsequently included in the 4.5 square mile annexation.

The first year of existence of KESA, the board met weekly to organize and get themselves up and running. They made remarkable progress in that effort. That first year they put in an incredible amount of work in order to assure taxpayers of a return on their tax dollar and their safety. Their contract with the City of Homer was most helpful, in that those dollars enabled the city to provide more services to the area through KESA. The plans that were established that first year, between October 2000 and January of 2002, included stations in the outlying areas, the acquisition of equipment to be placed out East End Road to provide quicker response to that area, and eventually a full Fire Station near McNeil Canyon and on Diamond Ridge Road. The loss of 1/4th of anticipated revenues will delay these plans.

There is tremendous potential for a close working relationship with the City of Homer that will benefit both the City and the KESA service area. In no way would I want to see that relationship compromised. However, I believe that it was unfortunate that the people of the service area that was formed based on their strong vote, had no voice in the removal of a significant chunk of the tax base of their service area.

Thank you for listening.

Very sincerely,



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